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**Van:** ITUC Press <press@ituc-csi.org>  
**Verzonden:** zaterdag 23 juni 2012 18:05  
**Aan:** ITUC Online  
**Onderwerp:** Newsletter no. 5 Rio+20: World Leaders do not deliver on the Future We Want

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International Trade Union Confederation

## Trade unions on the move for Rio+20

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 11-22 June 2012

### World Leaders do not deliver on the Future We Want



This is the fifth in a series of messages we will be sending to keep you up to date on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20, as well as our own associated event - The Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment (11-13 June).

In order to receive updates, please register to our newsletter [here](#).

**Don't know what Rio+20 is? [read more](#)**

### No Social Justice without Environmental Protection

The global trade union movement is bitterly disappointed at the Declaration of the Rio+20 Summit, a declaration that lacks the concrete measures necessary now to end senseless environmental destruction, drive investment into the green economy to create jobs and reduce the alarming growth in inequity with the guarantee of social protection for the most vulnerable people.

The trade union movement has prepared over two years for this important United Nations Conference on Sustainability, the conference called Rio+20. What should have been a big opportunity for world leaders to meet and take brave decisions on our future, "*The future that we want*", turned out to be a big failure in global governance. What happened? It started with the fact that the text that has been negotiated over a year was not finalised at the end of the negotiations. Then the Brazilian government made a new draft of

the Declaration (the main outcome of the conference). The Brazilian draft came with "Take it or leave it". This left the conference with a closed text the day before Heads of State arrived. The 114 Heads of State came to the Conference not spending one single hour negotiating and each delivered a speech and had their photograph taken together.

Words are not enough; a UN process with no targets, no timelines and no serious inclusion of unions and civil society does nothing to fuel the anxiety of people suffering from unemployment, from poverty or from environmental destruction of their lands and/or livelihoods", said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the ITUC.

[Read Sharan Burrow's own words about the outcome of the conference](#)  
[Trade Union Statement for Rio+20: There will be no social justice without environmental protection](#)  
[Read the United Nations Rio+20 Outcome Document](#)

## **50,000 people on the march for concrete actions in Rio+20**

Yesterday 50,000 people marched through the streets of Rio de Janeiro demanding that the Heads of Governments listen to civil society. The Rio+20 is going nowhere. The Heads of Government were confronted with a closed text.

"The rally was great!", said Mi-Jeoug Kim from KCTU confederation in South Korea. "It is not like in South Korea where we continue to shout our messages across the rally. It was an inspiration to see all the colours and the different clothing and costumes. In South Korea we all wear the same blue thing! The atmosphere was also great, there were such energy! However, I was disappointed there was no samba!".

[Read more \(ITUC online\).](#)  
[Pictures from the rally](#)

## **Trade Union Assembly in Rio de Janeiro**

Over 100 trade union centres from across the globe, gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the II Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment from 11 to 13 June, a few days ahead of Rio+20, have called on governments to undertake a process of profound change in all areas of economic life.

[Read more \(ITUC online\).](#)  
[Read the Statement from the Assembly](#)  
[Video on TU best practices For a Greener Economy](#)

## **People's Summit**

In parallel with the official high level Summit the People's Summit has been happening all week. People from global civil society organisations, collectives and social movements have occupied the landfill and proposed a new way of living on the planet, in solidarity, against the commodification of nature and in defence of the commons. As many as 20,000 people have participated in this program of thousands of actions and events

Trade Unions came to the People's Summit well prepared, with the statement from the Trade Union Assembly a few days earlier. The statement was the basis for debates on the links between labour and other themes and was reflected in the People's Summit Declaration.

Rafael Freire, Confederal Secretary of the TUCA (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas) has been part of the negotiating team and trade unionists have been involved in the board of the People's Summit.

[read more \(ITUC online\)](#)

## **Rio Dialogue on Decent Work, Unemployment and Migration**

Over 2,000 people and ten panellists participated in the debate on the future of job creation in the planet and a new development model. Through a voting system, participants supported that the creation of decent work depends on the commitment of countries to ensure workers' participation in negotiations, improvements of working conditions and social protection.

One of the recommendations approved by the plenary stated that "governments to commit to a social protection and decent work for all by 2030, including access to health, unemployment, maternity and child protection". It also supported gender equality in the workplace, targets for green and decent jobs and a strategy for retraining the workforce.

[Read more \(ITUC online\) and watch the video on the Unemployment, decent work and migrations - Press Conference with Sharan Burrow](#)

## **Building and Construction workers' Statement to the Rio+20**

The BWI (Building and Wood Workers International) met in Rio de Janeiro to prepare for the Rio+20 Summit. The outcome of the conference is summarised in this declaration.

"The worldwide transformation towards sustainable development models is by nature a trade union affair, touching the heart of trade union concerns and topics as the multiple crises besides the economic and environmental crisis also includes a social crisis, which expresses in a global employment crisis and a structural crisis of justice."

[Read the full statement.](#)

## **Robin Hood came to town**

A broad coalition of trade unions and civil society groups has been active on the financial transactions tax (also called a Robin Hood tax) in Rio. A seminar was held as part of the People's Summit and it was followed by a rally of 400 people including the Rio bank workers union outside the Brazilian Central Bank. The Robin Hood tax has been getting a lot of attention from participants, especially in the People's Summit. Unfortunately, the FTT is not in the final declaration of the Rio+20. But good news came from Europe that 9 countries have chosen to move forward to an FTT. Our coalition presented a statement to the Leading Group at a side event..

[Read the Financial Transactions Tax Statement](#)  
[More pictures from the rally.](#)

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